

MINUTES

Bar Harbor Cruise Ship Task Force

Thursday April 10, 2008

8:30 AM

Council Chambers

Municipal Building

93 Cottage Street

I. Call to Order 8:35 AM

Members Present: Chair Paul Paradis; Vice-Chair Chris Fogg, Secretary Anne Krieg; Nathan Young, Fred Cook; Mary Opdyke; Greg Veilleux; Charlie Phippen; George Seavey; Greg Gordon (8:47 AM)

II. Excused Absences

Phippen moved with a second from Gordon to excuse Bob Bahr and Amy Powers. All were in favor of the motion.

III. Minutes from previous meeting

Veilleux noted he was at the meeting. Opdyke wanted to make sure the record reflected Kay's comments of concerns with allowing other businesses to participate in providing services to the cruise ship industry and that if the cruise ship traffic is controlled by a private entity that this may not be allowed.

The minutes were unanimously approved as amended by a motion from Young with a second from Opdyke.

IV. Staff Reports

A. Report from Police Chief on Taxi Cab service delivery on cruise ship days

Chief Young reviewed the situation of assigning spaces for taxis. There were concerns from a business that was not present. 5 possible companies are involved with taxi stand provision. It was noted that some cab companies sell tours, some through internet and some sell through Destination New England. Chief Young is asking for a recommendation as the companies are waiting to set up for their operations for the year. There is no cap on the number of companies currently. There was discussion if preference should be given to local companies. Chief Young noted that we need a plan but it needs to be fluid as well as fair to business if not providing for all the companies. The task force discussed whether it is appropriate to make a recommendation. – There is a concern from the industry that companies dominate the area where they are. It was also

noted that the study called for the current cab area to be pedestrian only. The Taxi services also need to provide for passengers needing medical services as well as tours and general services. It was questioned what if a space was dedicated and the queuing was somewhere else? Chief Young reminded the task force that tours must be sold as an excursion right now in the code.

A representative from At Your Service taxi/tour company, Claire Bingham spoke. She said most of tours are pre booked and the customers are currently told they would be picked up in front of Harbor Place. She noted that people need rides to places such as Rite Aid, hospital, airport, and Olli's Trolley. She also noted that her company operates year round and questioned the fairness of giving assistance to out of town companies.

Chief Young also informed the group that the regulations include that the fare must originate and return to bar harbor to operate here and that the company must have a license.

It was noted that Cyr buses are not licensed to operate here as they are not required to register in the town.

Harborview Park was discusses as an option for a taxi stand location. There was a concern that if more companies came to Bar Harbor, there would not be enough spaces.

Young moved, with a second from Seavey to allow the licensed cab companies that are currently (as of this date) licensed to use the current 4 spaces in front of Harbor Place for 2008.

The motion was withdrawn after discussion.

Young moved, with a second from Seavey to recommend to Town Council that the taxi space designation for cruise ship days in 2008 remain the same as 2006/07 seasons pending a more complete plan.

Paul noted the Destination Management Study had them moving around the corner in front of the ice cream shop.

The intent was noted to limit the conflicts and violations regarding hawking and security by having the police right there. It was also noted that a consistent location was important.

It was noted that the Parking & Traffic Committee chose to not make a recommendation as the Destination Management Study outlined options to manage this use.

Motion passed unanimously.

V. Regular Business

A. Continue discussion with Ocean Properties on future plans for West Street and service to Cruise Ship tenders and passengers

Eben Salvatore from Ocean Properties indicated that a new pedestrian design is pending to respond some of the concerns expressed.

Chief Young indicated he spoke with US Customs and the Coast Guard about their proposed facility. US Customs indicated that they prefer to clear on board the ship. They further noted that Ocean Properties had asked US Customs what it takes to have a plan but that these officials are not partnering or requiring them to have it and they do not need a landside facility for their work. Mr. Salvatore agreed with this explanation and noted that he's using the Federal standards and will be asking for waivers from US Customs for some facility specifications. He said he feels US Customs will use it as it will be easier for US Customs to come to a building and not on the boat. Ocean Properties is planning this facility for the 2009 season

B. Bus queuing

Chief Young reviewed the current operations. He also reviewed the 1997 Waterfront Master Plan and how the buses grew in size since the plan was done so could not do Phase II (expansion of queuing at Harborview Park) because the Harborview Park could not be changed to accommodate the longer buses. Newport Drive also had to be modified because of this change in the size of buses. Agamont Lane usage prohibited because of blocking views to the water.

He also noted that the hours of 7:30 to 10:30 AM is the most chaotic time for bus traffic and then it's a smooth transition through the remainder of the day.

The Task Force reviewed the map of the area for discussion.

After lengthy discussion of options, Young moved with a second from Veilleux to recommend to the Town Council that they dedicate 2 spaces at the bottom of Agamont Park across from Harbor Place with one additional space after the crosswalk in this location for loading and unloading of buses and 2 spaces at the end of Main street at its corner with West Street for unloading and loading. This will be allowed to 11 AM, extended from the current requirement of 10:30.

All were in favor of this motion.

C. Cruise Ship Fees – continued discussion on possible project

Chairman Paradis reviewed the fee schedule table he prepared for the task force discussion. He noted that the current fee covers basic expenses; but fees can also cover other items in relation to the provision of services. He noted water monitoring and training/conferences as other possible expenditures as well as the cost of handing out maps to visitors.

Paradis also reviewed the ship schedule worksheet that shows a comparison with existing fees and proposed fees. He discussed Portland's fees, and a series of scenarios that included the total fee along with private tendering.

There was a recommendation to add a column comparing to Newport, Rhode Island or for Canadian ports. It was noted that the comparisons need to be with a place that has tendering operations.

Fogg raised a concern about the proposals for any fee increases to this extent. It was noted that there would be an 18 month advance for the industry. It was also noted that if our costs are going up 3% a year then this exponential change could be to our detriment. There was discussion of a need to build in an increase into the fee schedule.

VI. Public Comment - none

VII. Items for next agenda –

The Task Force agreed to keep moving with this agenda.

Chris Fogg also discussed delays in clearing Customs for passengers. He questioned why they could not clear in transit over to here from previous stop. It was alleged that they used to do that but can't now carry weapons so that's why it stopped. This topic is in the Destination Management Study as it affects the industry.

VIII. Set next meeting time, date and place April 29, 2008 at 9 AM

IX. Adjournment 10:45 AM

These minutes were prepared by Anne Krieg, Planning Director and Secretary to the Cruise Ship Study Task Force for distribution on April 25, 2008.